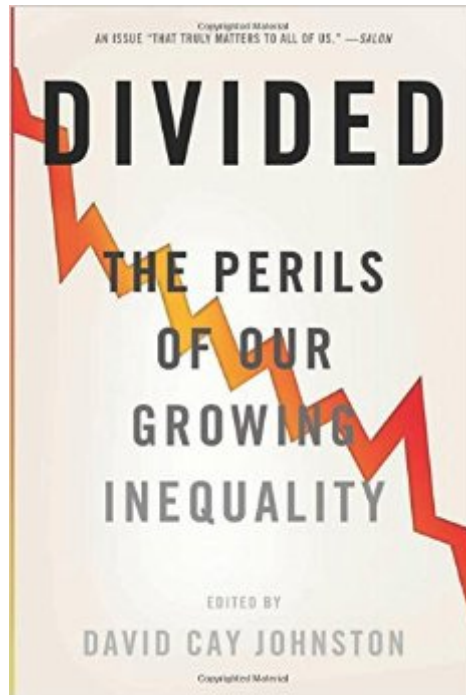


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Divided: The Perils Of Our Growing Inequality



Synopsis

Praised as a “page-turner” just the kind of spotlight that is needed • (Counterpunch) and “a potent chronicle of America’s extreme inequality” • (Kirkus Reviews), *Divided* collects the writings of leading scholars, activists, and journalists—including Elizabeth Warren, President Barack Obama, Joseph E. Stiglitz, Paul Krugman, and Barbara Ehrenreich—to provide an illuminating, multifaceted look at one of the most pressing issues facing America today. According to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Cay Johnston, most Americans, in inflation-adjusted terms, are now back to the average income of 1966. Shockingly, from 2009 to 2011 a third of all the increased income in a land of 300 million people went to just 30,000 of them, while the bottom 90 percent saw their income fall. Yet in this most unequal of developed nations, every aspect of inequality remains hotly contested and poorly understood. Exploring areas as diverse as education, justice, health care, social mobility, and political representation, here is an essential resource; “an indispensable guide to the causes and effects of the growing wealth gap” • (World Wide Work); “for anyone who cares about the future of America and compelling evidence that inequality can be ignored no longer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Numbers are tricky things. They can throw complicated problems into sharp relief, or they can obscure the fundamental issues to the point of hopelessness. Often, the first is quickly followed by the second. The burgeoning debate over the numbers that Tomas Picketty employs in his recent

book to demonstrate a secular trend toward income inequality is a classic example of this unfortunate pattern at work. It's a good thing, then, that we have David Cay Johnston's wonderful collection of essays on aspects of inequality in America. This methodical exploration of inequality has plenty of data to back it up. Unlike Picketty's book, however, it digs deeply into the process that created the new, oligarchic US, and the ways in which it has impacted--and extended itself through--such areas as education, health care, family viability, debt, hunger, and homelessness. Johnston's thesis is encapsulated by three short words close to the beginning of his Introduction: "In choosing inequality ..." What makes this book so useful is that it locates the inequality that's been building for the past four decades in specific decisions made by specific people--not in "globalization," the technology revolution, or some other allegedly irresistible trend. He doesn't offer a laundry list of recommendations to eliminate inequality, although he and his contributors mention quite a few along the way. What he offers instead is something more valuable: the understanding that if one group of fantastically wealthy people can remake the US economic system to suit their desires, the rest of us can organize to take it back--or, more precisely, to move it forward into the next stage of the movement for economic equality and freedom.

Class conflict, class struggle and class warfare are the driving motor forces of history. Class conflict, class struggle and class warfare are the driving motor forces of history. Close to half the United States population lives below or near the poverty line, with recent studies forecasting an almost untenable socio-economic future. Projections indicate that four out of five citizens or workers are guaranteed to experience bouts of poverty, prolonged unemployment and serious and debilitating economic insecurity. 'Divided' is a quality compendium that melds together a collection of intelligent populist writers and thinkers into one informative and very prescient book. Some of the better contemporary intellectuals commenting on domestic economics are here: Warren, Stiglitz, Ehrenreich, Krugman and Edelman all contribute sharp essays and fresh columns that Johnston's adroitly constructed into a valuable whole. The wage theft and paltry pay that workers experience each time they grab their paychecks - if they're fortunate enough to even have a regular gig - are disturbing topics running throughout. 'Divided' connects these themes, showing how they're manifestations of the extreme income polarization crippling the nation. It's an income polarization that's by far more stark and violent than in any other industrialized country on the planet. The most gut-wrenching and devastating reading occurs with the sections devoted to the family unit. The tragic and heartbreaking effects that low wages, inescapable personal debt and near poverty are having on overwhelmed families is a virtual hidden scandal of depressing proportions. Exhausted

and harried parents with child victims in tow struggle along in days and nights of economic and social desperation.

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